

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 AS-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00 /056 W
-----090101 260526Z /10

P R 240525Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8894
INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TAIPEI
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI
COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA AB JA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 9427

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, JA
SUBJECT: UPPER HOUSE ELECTION KICKED OFF

SUMMARY: CAMPAIGN FOR UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS, IN WHICH
LDP'S MAJORITY AT STAKE, OFFICIALLY OPENED ON JUNE 17.
SOME 320 CANDIDATES FROM SIX PARTIES AND ASSORTED
POLITICAL GROUPS PLUS INDEPENDENTS ARE COMPETING FOR
126 SEATS. MOST BETTING IS THAT LDP WILL LOSE MAJORITY
BY FEW SEATS BUT CONTINUE TO MANAGE UPPER HOUSE WITH
COOPERATION FROM CENTRISTS.
AS IN TWO PREVIOUS ELECTIONS, OPPOSITION PARTIES
HAVE WORKED OUT A FEW MUTUAL SUPPORT DEALS IN SPECIFIC
DISTRICTS. THEY AND LDP ARE RESORTING TO CATCHY POSTER
SLOGANS AND NATIONALLY KNOWN CANDIDATES TO ATTRACT
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UNCOMMITTED VOTERS, WHO COMPRISE NEARLY HALF OF
ELECTORATE. DESPITE HEAVY MEDIA PLAY AND BEST EFFORTS
OF PARTIES, VOTER INTEREST IN ELECTIONS APPEARS THUS
FAR TO BE LAGGING. NO IMPORTANT ISSUES--EXCEPT CONCERN
OVER RECESSION AND INFLATION--HAVE EMERGED, AND
ELECTORATE DOES NOT SEEM VERY CONCERNED ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER AT PROSPECT OF LDP'S LOSING UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY.

END SUMMARY.

1. ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR UPPER HOUSE, IN WHICH LDP'S SLIM MAJORITY (127 OF 252 SEATS) AT STAKE, OFFICIALLY BEGAN JUNE 17. DESPITE WEEKEND OF HEAVY RAIN IN MOST OF JAPAN, CAMPAIGN WORKERS, PARTY HEADS AND CANDIDATES GOT OFF TO ENERGETIC, FAST-PACED STARTS. TWO ASSAULTS, HOWEVER, MARRED CAMPAIGN DEBUT: MAN IN NAGOYA BROKE WINDSHIELD OF CAR IN WHICH DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST PARTY (DSP) CHAIRMAN KASUGA WAS RIDING; AND IN TOKYO, MAN ROUGHED UP MISAKO ENOKI, FEMINIST AND SUPPOSED KARATE EXPERT, WHO HEADS NEWLY-FORMED JAPAN WOMEN'S PARTY (JWP). OTHER PARTY HEADS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA, WENT OFF ON NATIONWIDE STUMPING TOURS, WHICH WILL CONTINUE UNTIL LEGALLY-SET 23-DAY CAMPAIGN PERIOD ENDS ON ELECTION DAY, JULY 10.

2. WHEN PRESCRIBED TIME LIMIT FOR REGISTERING CANDIDACY WAS REACHED JUNE 18, TOTAL OF 320 HAD SIGNED ON: 102 FOR 50 NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY SEATS AND 218 FOR 76 PREFECTURAL CONSTITUENCY SEATS. BREAKDOWN AS FOLLOWS:

	TOTAL	PREF.	NAT'L.	PRESENT	UP FOR
PARTY	CANDIDATES	CONST.	CONST.	STRENGTH	REELECTION
LDP	77	55	22	127	65
JSP	59	47	12	61	32

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CGP	15	6	9	24	10
JCP	52	45	7	20	9
DSP	11	7	4	10	5
NLC	13	9	4	1	0
SCL\$	10	8	2	0	0
PLL\$\$	10	5	5	0	0
JWP\$\$\$	10	3	7	0	0
OTHER GROUPS	17	12	5	0	0
INDEPENDENTS	46	21	25	7	3
VACANCIES			2	2	
TOTAL	320	218	102	252	126

\$ SOCIALIST CITIZENS' LEAGUE

\$\$ PROGRESSIVE LIBERAL LEAGUE

\$\$\$ JAPAN WOMEN'S PARTY

3. FOCUS OF ELECTION IS ON WHETHER LDP WILL RETAIN ITS 65 SEATS UP FOR REELECTION AND ITS ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN UPPER HOUSE. ALTHOUGH SUCCESS CANNOT BE RULED OUT, MOST OF CURRENT BETTING IS THAT LDP WILL LOSE MAJORITY BY FEW SEATS. JAPAN SOCIALIST PARTY (JSP) IS ALSO THOUGHT TO BE IN FOR SIGNIFICANT LOSSES. FOUR "CENTRIST" PARTIES--

CLEAN GOVERNMENT PARTY (CGP), DSP, NEW LIBERAL CLUB (NLC),
AND SOCIALIST CITIZENS' LEAGUE (SCL)--ARE WIDELY
EXPECTED TO PICK UP LDP AND JSP LOSSES MOSTLY IN URBAN AREAS.

4. IMPORTANT TO OUTCOME OF 1971 UPPER HOUSE ELECTION
AND OF SOME SIGNIFICANCE IN 1974 ELECTION WAS COOPERATION
AMONG OPPOSITION PARTIES. (IN BOTH ELECTIONS LDP WON
ONLY 62 SEATS.) IN 1971 ELECTION, FOR EXAMPLE, CGP
SUPPORT OF JSP CANDIDATES IN EIGHT RURAL, SINGLE-SEAT
PREFECTURAL CONTESTS WAS DECISIVE IN DEFEATING LDP
INCUMBENTS. SUCH ONE-SIDED AND EXTENSIVE COOPERATION
DEALS HAVE NOT BEEN WORKED OUT THIS YEAR. CGP HAS AGREED
TO SUPPORT JSP IN ONLY ONE DISTRICT; JCP, AFTER MUCH
WRANGLING, AGREED TO SUPPORT JSP IN ANOTHER; CGP WILL
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SUPPORT DSP CANDIDATES IN THREE PREFECTURES; AND IN
RETURN, CGP WILL HAVE DSP SUPPORT IN THREE. SCL, NEWCOMER
TO CENTRIST GROUP, WILL HELP DSP IN ONE PREFECTURE AND
CGP IN ANOTHER. THESE TRADE-OFFS MAY PROVIDE BASIS FOR
MODEST GAINS BY CENTRISTS, BUT THEY LEAVE JSP INCUMBENTS
IN SEVEN OF EIGHT KEY, SINGLE-SEAT CONSTITUTENCIES THEY
WON IN 1971 WITHOUT OUTSIDE HELP. SEVERAL OF THOSE DISTRICTS
THEREFORE MAY, AS LDP HOPES, GO TO CONSERVATIVES.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

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-----070174 240646Z /12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TOKYO 9427

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

5. MOST DIFFICULT PART OF ELECTION FOR PARTY ORGANIZERS, STRATEGISTS AND CANDIDATES THEMSELVES IS NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY. APART FROM NUMBER OF SEATS WON, PERFORMANCE OF EACH PARTY'S TOP CANDIDATE IS USUALLY CONSIDERED INDICATIVE OF PARTY'S APPEAL TO PUBLIC AT LARGE. JCP STANDARD BEARER THIS YEAR IS CHAIRMAN KENJI MIYAMOTO, WHO IS MAKING SECOND TRY FOR ELECTION. YOUNG SATSUKI EDA, SON OF LATE JSP LEADER WHO LEFT PARTY TO FOUND SCL, IS FAVORED TO GARNER LARGEST NUMBER OF VOTES, THEREBY BOLSTERING FLEDGLING SCL'S CREDIBILITY AS POLITICAL FORCE AND SIMULTANEOUSLY TAKING VOTES AWAY FROM JSP CANDIDATES, NOTABLY EX-TV COMMENTATOR HIDEO DEN, WHO TOPPED NATIONAL CONSTITUENCY LIST IN 1971. (EDA LED OFF HIS CAMPAIGN FROM HOSPITAL WHERE HE WAS RECOUPERATING FROM ULCER OPERATION.) SABURO OKITA, WELL-KNOWN ECONOMIC PLANNER, IS EXPECTED TO BE BEST PERFORMING NLC CANDIDATE. LDP HAS NOT FIELDDED NEW STAR OR "TALLENT" CANDIDATES THIS YEAR, APPARENTLY CONFIDENTIAL

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BECAUSE, WITH POPULARITY EBBING, POTENTIAL SHOWBIZ CANDIDATES WERE RELUCTANT TO TAKE ON LDP LABEL, DESPITE SUBSTANTIAL BLANDISHMENTS. SOME OTHER TALENT CANDIDATES HAVE GROUPED ENTERTAINER CANDIDATES FOCUSING ON YOUTH VOTE. LIKE MOST OF INDEPENDENTS AND FEMINISTS, THEIR CHANCES OF ACTUALLY WINNING SEATS ARE SMALL, BUT THEY COULD ATTRACT NON-AFFILIATED FLOATING VOTES AWAY FROM OTHER PARTIES. THIS WILL PROBABLY BE NET EFFECT OF SCL AS WELL. ALTHOUGH IT MORE CLOSELY RESEMBLES NORMAL POLITICAL PARTY, IT IS TOO WEAK, AT PRESENT ANYWAY, TO DO MUCH MORE THAN COLLECT VOTES THAT MIGHT HAVE GONE ELSEWHERE.

6. ALL PARTIES REGARD IT AS ESSENTIAL FOR THEIR SUCCESS TO GO BEYOND CONFINES OF PARTY SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS TO ATTRACT FLOATING VOTE (NEARLY HALF OF JAPAN'S 78.7 MILLION VOTERS HAVE, ACCORDING TO POLLS, NO SPECIFIC PARTY PREFERENCE). PARTY POSTERS, WHICH APPEARED ALL OVER TOKYO WITHIN HOURS OF CAMPAIGN'S OPENING, AND WHICH HAVE HALLMARKS OF JAPAN'S BEST AD AGENCIES, REFLECT FORWARD-LOOKING IMAGE THEY TRYING TO IMPART. LDP'S POSTER, DESIGNED TO CONVEY IMPRESSION PARTY HAS REFORMED AND IS MAKING "FRESH START," SHOWS LARGE GREEN APPLE WITH CLOGAN "TOWARD TOMORROW." JSP, CASTING ITSELF AS LEADER OF FUTURE COALITION GOVERNMENT, HAS POSTER FEATURING YOUNG ACTRESS IN KIMONO WITH CAPTION, "ITZ'S OUR TURN, WE'LL DO

OUR BEST." LEAST EASILY COMPREHENSIVE POSTER IS THAT OF NLC: A BUNDLE OF COLORED PENCILS UNDER CAPTION, "FOR UPPER HOUSE VARIETY," APPARENTLY MEANT TO CONVEY NLC'S COMMITMENT TO ORIGINAL CONCEPT OF AN UPPER HOUSE FILLED WITH INDEPENDENT-THINKING WISEMEN, WHO WOULD CHECK LOWER-HOUSE EXCESSES.

7. AT OPENING OF CAMPAIGN, EACH PARTY ISSUED PLATFORM
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STATEMENT TREATING SEVEN TOPICS SELECTED BY MEDIA -- ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT, EDUCATION, FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE, WELFARE, AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, ENERGY, AND PARTY'S BASIC POLITICAL STAND. FAMILIAR FOREIGN POLICY AND DEFENSE STANDS SHOW NO SIGNS OF BECOMING MAJOR ELECTION ISSUES AT THIS STAGE. IN FACT, ONLY THEMES THAT APPEAR TO BE AROUSING INTEREST THUS FAR ADDRESS ECONOMIC ISSUES OF RECESSION AND INFLATION.

8. IN FIRST DAYS OF CAMPAIGN, VOTER ENTHUSIASM HAS BEEN NOTICEABLY LOW, WITH CROWDS AT SPEECHES SMALL. MEDIA AND ALL PARTIES, HOWEVER, ARE DRAMATIZING ELECTION AS POSSIBLE "TURNING POINT" IN JAPAN'S POSTWAR POLITICS WITH LDP'S CONTROL OF UPPER HOUSE IN BALANCE. IN CAMPAIGN SPEECHES, JSP CHAIRMAN NARITA HAS BEEN PROMOTING PARTY'S IDEA OF ALL "NON-LDP" FORCES COALITION TO SUCCEED LDP, BUT DSP AND CGP, TO SAY NOTHING OF NLC, ARE STILL AGAINST PARTICIPATING WITH COMMUNISTS. PRIMIN FUKUDA HAS BEEN TRYING TO PLAY POSSIBILITY OF LOSS OF MAJORITY AS THREAT TO POLITICAL STABILITY OF COUNTRY, BUT RESPONSE APPEARS TO BE SLIGHT. MOST VOTERS SEEM NOT TO CARE VERY MUCH WHETHER LDP CONTINUES ON WITH SECURE UPPER HOUSE MAJORITY OR WHETHER, HAVING LOST MAJORITY BY FEW SEATS, IT CARRIES ON THROUGH SOME FORM OF COOPERATION WITH CENTRISTS. QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER ELECTORATE WILL AWAKEN TO THAT ISSUE -- OR INDEED ANY ISSUE -- AS CAMPAIGN GOES ON.
MANSFIELD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PARTY STRENGTH, UPPER HOUSE, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
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Document Number: 1977TOKYO09427
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2040371
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UPPER HOUSE ELECTION KICKED OFF SUMMARY: CAMPAIGN FOR UPPER HOUSE ELECTIONS, IN WHICH LDP'S MAJORITY AT STAKE, OFFICIALLY OPENED ON JUNE
TAGS: PINT, JA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/8b684977-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009